

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-11. (canceled).

12. (currently amended): A method for stabilizing 1,4-dihydroxy-2-naphthoic acid, which comprises reducing the level of oxygen dissolved in a solution containing 1,4-dihydroxy-2-naphthoic acid, by substituting the oxygen with an inert gas, and further conducting a heat treatment on the solution.

13. (currently amended): A method for producing food or drink containing 1,4-dihydroxy-2-naphthoic acid, which comprises stabilizing 1,4-dihydroxy-2-naphthoic acid by ~~the method according to claim 12,~~ reducing the level of oxygen dissolved in a solution containing 1,4-dihydroxy-2-naphthoic acid by substituting the oxygen with an inert gas, and further conducting a heat treatment on the solution.

14. and 15. (canceled).

16. (currently amended): The method according to claim ~~15~~12 or 13, wherein the oxygen dissolved in said solution is kept reduced during the heat treatment.

17. (currently amended): The method according to claim ~~15~~12 or 13, wherein the oxygen dissolved in said solution is kept reduced after the heat treatment.

18. (previously presented) The method according to claim 12 or 13, wherein the solution is at least one liquid food or drink selected from the group consisting of a milk, a drink containing a dairy product, a lactic acid bacteria beverage, a soy-milk, a vegetable juice, a fruit juice, a tea drink, a coffee drink, a cocoa drink, a sports drink, an energy drink, a carbonated beverage, an alcoholic beverage and a soup.

19. (previously presented) The method according to claims 12 or 13, wherein the solution is a solution containing a milk or a dairy product.

20. (canceled).

21. (currently amended): The method according to claim 13, ~~wherein a part of or all of the processes which~~ is carried out partially or entirely under conditions in which the oxygen is reduced.

22. (previously presented): Food or drink produced by the method according to claim 13.